



TEAMSTERS LOCAL 727

Representing nearly 10,000
hardworking men and women
throughout the Chicagoland area

John T. Coli
Secretary-Treasurer

John T. Coli Jr.
President

FEB. 24, 2016 | PHARMACY NEWS

LOCAL 727 CONTINUES FIGHT OVER OSCO PHARMACISTS' HEALTH BENEFITS

Company Still Forcing Members to Pay More Than Other Employees for Same Coverage

Teamsters Local 727 continues to pursue justice after learning that Jewel-Osco management is forcing Osco pharmacists to pay significantly more than other employees for the same health and welfare coverage.

The union filed a grievance on behalf of all pharmacist members because of the company's egregious contract violation. According to Section 6.1 of the collective bargaining agreement, "The Employer shall offer a health care plan to eligible full-time and part-time employees on the same basis (except in regard to optical coverage) as said plans may be offered to store management and other hourly paid store employees, respectively."

The company took nearly two months to respond, only to deny the grievance. The union is now preparing to take the case to arbitration.

"It's right there in black and white," said John T. Coli, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 727. "What the company is doing not only violates the contract, but it is also morally reprehensible."

Below is a comparison of the 2016 non-Healthy Pursuits HRA Plan monthly premiums for Osco pharmacists, Jewel-Osco warehouse and transportation workers represented by Teamsters Local 710 and the company.

2016 COMPANY HRA PLAN

	Osco pharmacists	Warehouse/Transp. workers	Employer
Single	\$171.34	\$138.36	\$536.77
Employee + Spouse	\$414.61	\$255.06	\$1,122.83
Family	\$576.72	\$309.23	\$1,615.83

Despite the fact that the company's costs are the same for both Osco pharmacists and warehouse/transportation workers, pharmacists are paying \$33.02 more per month for single coverage, \$159.55 more per month for employee + spouse coverage, and a whopping \$267.49 more per month for family coverage in the HRA Plan.



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Of the 342 Osco pharmacists who elected for company health and welfare coverage in 2016, 146 are in the HRA plan, making it by far the most popular plan among pharmacists. It also is the only plan for which the company charges pharmacists more than warehouse/transportation employees.

To date, Osco management has failed to provide a sufficient explanation for the difference when questioned by the union.

“When you add up the numbers, it’s plain to see that our pharmacist members have been unfairly forced to shoulder the financial burden of the company’s health plan,” Coli said.

The union initially requested information about the costs and contributions associated with Jewel-Osco’s health and welfare plan on Nov. 5, 2015. When the company finally responded, Jewel-Osco management said it would not provide the information unless the union signed a confidentiality agreement. Management then failed to sufficiently explain why the requested information, which is directly related to the terms and conditions of members’ employment, is proprietary or otherwise sensitive company information.

Union representatives filed two unfair labor practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board. Weeks after the second charge was filed on Jan. 28, management finally provided the requested information.

“Now we know why the company did not want to give the union this information,” Coli said. “But their secret is out, and they can’t hide anymore.”

The union also received information about the company’s “Healthy Pursuits” wellness program. Unlike the Teamsters Local 727 Health and Welfare Benefit’s wellness program — which provides 100 percent coverage with no co-pays if participants and their spouses complete an annual physical and work with a health coach (if recommended) — Healthy Pursuits only gives employees reduced premiums for six months before requiring participants and spouses take additional steps to receive reduced premiums for the next six months.

However, even factoring in the Healthy Pursuits wellness program, pharmacists still pay significantly more for the HRA Plan than warehouse/transportation employees.

The union sent the company a contract reopener on Feb. 5 in advance of the current three-year contract’s expiration on May 7.

“Local 727 remains committed to maintaining total transparency with our pharmacist members,” Coli said. “This fight is far from over.”

If you have questions, contact your Local 727 representative, Zach Frankenbach, at (847) 696-7500 or zach@teamsterslocal727.org.

Nothing in this article should be read as the union’s waiver of any legal argument, position or additional grievance. The union does not forfeit its right to make any and all supplemental arguments.